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MANAGEMENT

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STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

No Field Counterpart to this HN

The DDCI has requested that the attached statement issued by the President concerning the two new Executive orders be circulated to all Agency personnel.

Harry E. Fitzwater
Deputy Director
for
Administration

Attachment

DISTRIBUTION: ALL EMPLOYEES

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THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

December 4, 1981

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

Today I am issuing two Executive Orders, one to govern the activities of our intelligence agencies and one to reestablish the Intelligence Oversight Board, which works to insure that our intelligence activities are lawful. These Orders are designed to provide America's intelligence community with clearer, more positive guidance and to remove the aura of suspicion and mistrust that can hobble our Nation's intelligence efforts.

This action is consistent with my promise in the campaign to revitalize America's intelligence system. The American people are well aware that the security of their country -- and in an age of terrorism, their personal safety as well -- is tied to the strength and efficiency of our intelligence-gathering organizations.

These Orders have been carefully drafted -- in consultation with the intelligence committees of both houses of the Congress -- to maintain the legal protection of all American citizens. They also give our intelligence professionals clear guidelines within which to do their difficult and essential job. Contrary to a distorted image that emerged during the last decade, there is no inherent conflict between the intelligence community and the rights of our citizens. Indeed, the purpose of the intelligence community is the protection of our people.

This is not to say mistakes were never made and that vigilance against abuse is unnecessary. But an approach that emphasizes suspicion and mistrust of our own intelligence efforts can undermine this Nation's ability to confront the increasing challenge of espionage and terrorism. This is particularly true in a world in which our adversaries pay no heed to the concerns for individual rights and freedoms that are so important to Americans and their government. As we move into the 1980's, we need to free ourselves from the negative attitudes of the past and look to meeting the needs of the country.

To those who view this change of direction with suspicion, let me assure you that while I occupy this office, no intelligence agency of the United States, or any other agency for that matter, will be given the authority to violate the rights and liberties guaranteed to all Americans by our Constitution and laws. The provisions of these Executive Orders make this abundantly clear.

Most Americans realize that intelligence is a good and necessary profession to which high caliber men and women dedicate their lives. We respect them for their honorable and often perilous service to our Nation and the cause of freedom. For all our technological advances, the gathering of information and its analysis depend finally on human judgment; and good judgment depends on the experience, integrity, and professionalism of those who serve us in the intelligence community.

Let us never forget that good intelligence saves American lives and protects our freedom. The loyalty and selflessness of our intelligence community during hard times are testimony to its commitment to the principles on which our country is based. I have faith in our intelligence professionals and expect each and every one of them to live up to the ideals and standards set by these Executive Orders.

These Orders charge our intelligence agencies to be vigorous, innovative, and responsible in the collection of accurate and timely information -- information essential for the conduct of our foreign policy and crucial to our national safety. The country needs this service and is willing to allocate the resources necessary to do the job right.

It is not enough, of course, simply to collect information. Thoughtful analysis is vital to sound decision-making. The goal of our intelligence analysts can be nothing short of the truth, even when that truth is unpleasant or unpopular. I have asked for honest, objective analysis, and I shall expect nothing less. When there is disagreement, as there often is, on the difficult questions of our time, I expect those honest differences of view to be fully expressed.

These Orders stipulate that special attention be given to detecting and countering the espionage and other threats that are directed by hostile intelligence services against us at home and abroad. These hostile services respect none of the liberties and rights of privacy that these Orders protect. Certainly the same can be said of international terrorists, who present another important area of concern and responsibility for our intelligence professionals.

I want to stress that the primary job of the CIA is to conduct intelligence activities overseas and to deal with certain foreign persons who come into this country. The FBI takes primary responsibility for security activities within the United States, directed against hostile foreigners and those Americans who seek to do damage to our national security.

These Orders do not alter this basic division of labor; they reaffirm it. They also encourage the fullest possible cooperation among the CIA, the FBI and other agencies of the intelligence community as they seek to deal with fundamental challenges to our national security -- challenges that respect neither national boundaries nor citizenship.

As these Executive Orders are issued, I again want to express my respect and admiration for the men and women of our intelligence community: They run the risks; they bear the tensions; they serve in silence. They cannot fully be thanked in public, but I want them to know that their job is vital and that the American people, and their President, are profoundly grateful for what they do.